

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 3 with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention features *E. coli*-specific primers selected from the nucleotide sequence between 81889 and 83238 of *E. coli* genome (GenBank Accession No. AP002562; SEQ ID NO: 12). This region contains three open reading frames (ORFs), i.e, ECs3458, ECs3459 (SEQ ID NO: 13) and ECs3460, encoding three hypothetical proteins with unknown functions. DNA sequence in this region is conserved in both pathogenic and non-pathogenic *E. coli* groups.